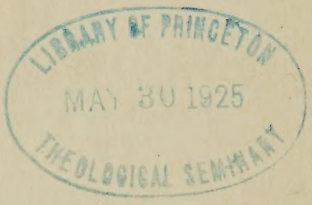
MANUAL
OF
UNITARIAN BELIEF.

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.



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Manual of Unitarian belief

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MANUAL OF UNITARIAN BELIEF

BY

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE

JOEL 1: 2, 3. *Hath this been in your days, or in the days of your fathers? Tell ye your children of it and let your children tell their children.*

TWENTIETH EDITION

REVISED AND PUBLISHED WITH
A NEW LIST OF REFERENCES

BOSTON
THE BEACON PRESS, INC.
1924

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PRINTED IN U. S. A.

PREFACE

As Unitarians have no creed, and as their union is one of sympathy and co-operation, and not of formulas, no one among them has any right to define the views of others. A Manual such as this is meant to express what is the general belief of the majority of Unitarians. Every proposition contained in it is open to discussion, correction, and revision. No one is bound by it and it does not attempt to limit thought, but rather to stimulate and rouse inquiry.

The successive subjects are intended to be made the theme of discussion and to suggest to both teacher and pupil topics for investigation. To this end questions originally prepared by Mrs. Kate Gannett Wells, and now somewhat revised, are added at the close of each lesson, and references are given to passages of Scripture, to appropriate books and pamphlets and to hymns expressive of Unitarian principles and ideals.

It is recommended that the text at the beginning and the hymn at the end of each lesson be committed to memory, and that two or more of the pamphlets in the list of references be read in advance of each meeting of the class. All the

pamphlets are published by the American Unitarian Association and may be obtained by addressing the Publication Department, 25 Beacon St., Boston, Mass. The books may be purchased from The Beacon Press, Inc., 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., or may be borrowed without charge from the Circulating Library at the same address.

For this twentieth edition of Dr. Clarke's Manual the text has been carefully and sympathetically revised by Rev. Charles T. Billings and the hymns and references have been added to the original material. Several of the lessons have been consolidated and one new lesson (No. 19) has been added.

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Manual of Unitarian Belief

LESSON I

RELIGION

Psalm 90:1. *Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.*

1. Religion may be defined as the worship and service of God. It is necessary, because man is feeble, and needs divine power to give him strength; he is ignorant, and needs divine light to guide him; he is selfish, and needs the inspiration to service and to character; he is mortal, and needs faith in things unseen and eternal.

2. That religion is natural to man appears from the fact that in a higher or lower form it has been found among all races and nations, among civilized and savage peoples, in ancient and modern times.

3. The following elements in the soul of man constitute the basis of religion; namely, the sense of *dependence* and awe in the face of the mysterious facts of life; *conscience,* or the sense of right and wrong, giving the ideas of duty and responsi-

bility; *reason,* or the faculty which perceives the truth and its universal and necessary laws; *aspiration,* which tends toward the good, the beautiful, and the true.

4. Some have tried to emphasize one aspect of religion at the expense of the others. They have been content to worship and neglect service, or have tried to be useful and neglected worship. The true worship of God nourishes good will to men. Works lead inevitably to faith, and true religious faith always works. The best service comes from the man whose heart is fixed on God. Religion fails if it is regarded as apart from life. It is really a part of life.

The Stream of Religious Faith

From heart to heart, from creed to creed
The hidden river runs;
It quickens all the ages down,
It binds the sires to sons,—

The stream of faith, whose source is God,
Whose sound, the sound of prayer,
Whose meadows are the holy lives
Upspringing everywhere.

And still it moves, a broadening flood,
And fresher, fuller grows

A sense as if the sea were near,
Towards which the river flows.

O Thou who art the secret Source
That riseth in each soul,
Thou art the Ocean, too,—and thine,
That ever deepening roll!

WILLIAM CHANNING GANNETT, 1875.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the definition of religion? What is the difference between the worship and the service of God? How does worshipping and serving God help one to decide upon what is right? What four reasons are given to show the necessity of religion?

2. Why do we think religion is natural to man? What is a great difference between the present and past worship of God? (In the past, the sacrifice of animal and occasionally of human life; in the present, the sacrifice of the selfish will.) Is fear or love the best motive in religion? Why? Which is apt to be more lasting?

3. What constitutes the basis of religion? How does the sense of dependence come to us? What is the difference between conscience and reason? Does reason sharpen our conscience? Could we long to be better if we did not feel that there is a higher life which we are capable of living?

4. Is service its own reward? Does not morality need religion as much as religion needs morality? Can you think of any body of men who have placed worship

above service, or service above worship? Why are both needed? Why is religion weak apart from life?

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LESSON II

CHRISTIANITY

John 10:10. *I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly.*

5. Christianity is the religion taught by Jesus and his Apostles, as recorded in the New Testament. Founded by Jesus, this religion has continued to the present time, and is still the faith professed by those nations of the world which are most advanced in civilization.

6. Men call themselves Christians who recognize in Jesus and his teaching the source of all that is best in their religion. Some Christians feel that they only are Christians who have adopted a certain theory that Jesus is God—a theory which Jesus himself never held, but which grew up in the early centuries of the Church. Unitarians believe that all are really Christians, whatever creed or lack of creed they profess, who think, act and live in the spirit of Jesus.

When we read the life and teachings of Jesus we find in them what feeds the moral and spiritual nature, and satisfies the highest needs of the soul. We then believe consciously and experi-

mentally in him, because he helps us to be good and to do good.

When we are able to compare the character and truth of Jesus with those of other teachers and masters—as Moses, Confucius, Buddha, Mohammed, Socrates—we find in him a greater depth and fullness of spiritual life than in any other and so we believe in him as the best of teachers and masters.

7. The two great divisions of the Christian Church in this country are the Protestant and the Roman Catholic. Unitarians believe Protestantism to be more in accordance with the teaching of Jesus, and we also find it more frequently associated with free thought, social progress, and liberal institutions.

Our Master

O Lord and Master of us all!
  Whate'er our name or sign,
We own thy sway, we hear thy call,
  We test our lives by thine.

We faintly hear, we dimly see,
  In differing phrase we pray;
But, dim or clear, we own in thee
  The light, the truth, the way.

To do thy will is more than praise,
As words are less than deeds;
And simple trust can find thy ways
We miss with chart of creeds.

Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord;
What may thy service be?—
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
But simply following thee.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER, 1866.

QUESTIONS

5. What does Christianity mean? Why does it have that name? Is something more than civilization needed in order to make us happy and useful?

6. Who are Christians? Is it Christian to hold a belief about Jesus or to practice the religion of Jesus? Are people who are called Christians always good and wise? Why does Jesus seem dearer and better to you than Moses, Confucius, Buddha, Mohammed, or Socrates? Are they not also masters? What is spiritual life? Is there a reason for everything? Shall we use our reason about religious matters? Has Christianity grown? Has it varied from age to age? What are its vital elements? How would you define Christianity? Is Christianity something that appeals to your thought, or to your loyalty? or both? If it appeals to your heart and mind and will, does not this show that it stands high among the religions of the world? What is meant

by loving God with the mind? Is Christianity a fixed system, or is it still capable of growth?

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LESSON III

PROTESTANTISM

John 8:32. *The Truth shall make you free.*

8. Protestantism derives its name from the protest made by the German princes at the Diet of Speier (Spires) in 1529 against the crushing of the new doctrines which were beginning to hold sway. Martin Luther was the moving spirit of Protestantism. He maintained that the authority of the Bible was above that of the Pope. He did not, however, indicate who should interpret the Bible, and it needed a mighty intellect to organize a new church on the basis of the new authority. This was the work of John Calvin, but even his guidance could not prevent the new church from becoming divided. The Church of England, though influenced by Calvinism, maintains now that it is the purified Catholic Church. The Quakers separated from the Protestant Church because of their doctrine of the "inner light," and the Methodists in their protest against predestination. The Baptists, Presbyterians and the Congregationalists were all Calvinistic, but the Baptists separated themselves from others

by their interpretation of the rite of baptism, and Presbyterians and Congregationalists because of their forms of government. Unitarians are protestants because their churches sprang from the older churches of Protestantism—in England chiefly from the Presbyterians, in the United States from the Congregationalists.

9. The result is that Protestant Christendom is today divided into many sects which are too often rivals of one another. These divisions prevent the united action which would make Christianity vitally effective. This is the great weakness of Christianity. The solution seems to lie not in the absorption of the sects by any one church, but in a larger spirit of co-operation whereby the sects will no longer look upon themselves as *sects,* cut off from each other, but as *branches* of the Christian Church, drawing their power from the same great sources and leading their adherents to the deeper spirit that makes all one.

He was very confident the Lord had more light and truth yet to break forth out of his holy word

Who dares to bind to his dull sense
The oracles of heaven,
For all the nations, tongues, and climes,
And all the ages given?

That universe, how much unknown!
  That ocean unexplored!
The Lord hath yet more light and truth
  To break forth from his word.

Darkling our great forefathers went
  The first steps of the way;
'Twas but the dawning, yet to grow
  Into the perfect day:—
And grow it shall; our glorious Sun
  More fervid rays afford;
The Lord hath yet more light and truth
  To break forth from his word.

The valleys past, ascending still
  Our souls would higher climb,
And look down from supernal heights
  On all the bygone time.
Upward we press; the air is clear,
  And the sphere-music heard;
The Lord hath yet more light and truth
  To break forth from his word.

GEORGE RAWSON.

QUESTIONS

8. What is the derivation of the name Protestant? Who were the leading figures in the movement? What was the difference in their work? How did the divisions in the churches come about? What churches

separated from others on the basis of doctrine? of ritual? of government? of the source of authority?

9. How many sects can you enumerate? What is the harm of the sects? What is the good of them? What is the greatest weakness of Christianity? What do you think is the best remedy? How can we get men of different religious convictions to co-operate? Is a creed or a great purpose more effective?

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LESSON IV

UNITARIANISM

II Corinthians 3:17. *Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

10. Unitarianism is that form of Christianity which emphasizes the spiritual and practical rather than the dogmatic elements of faith and which affirms the underlying unities of thought and life.

Unitarians believe in—

(1) The Unity of God; God in one person rather than in three persons in one God. To Unitarians, God is an Infinite Spirit, the Universal Father, the Source of all life and truth, and the only object of worship.

(2) The Unity of Man; all men members one of another and designed for universal brotherhood.

(3) The Unity of Man with God in one divine nature, man as the child of God being a partaker of His Spirit.

(4) The Unity of Law; all things in earth and heaven controlled and guided by one loving will which has in it nothing capricious or spasmodic.

(5) The Unity of Destiny; God's love ultimately winning all souls into complete fellowship with Himself.

(6) The Unity of Life, here and hereafter, in one continued discipline, education and progress.

11. Unitarians emphasize the spiritual interpretations of religion rather than the formal or doctrinal or supernatural elements. They make love rather than fear the impulse to a Christian life. They appeal to men to be religious, not with the arguments of self-reproach but with those of self-respect. They put service above sacrament, reason above traditional opinions, character above creed. They feel that fixity of form or doctrine means the atrophy of thought and life, and so they keep their habits of worship and their methods of organization free and flexible. They hold that a living church must ever seek to deepen and enrich its thought and worship, and that a Unitarian Church offers men primarily, not salvation or safety, but a vigorous inspiration for a nobler and more abundant life.

Behold, I make all things new

O Life that maketh all things new,—
The blooming earth, the thoughts of men!
Our pilgrim feet, wet with thy dew,
In gladness hither turn again.

From hand to hand the greeting flows,
From eye to eye the signals run,
From heart to heart the bright hope glows;
The seekers of the Light are one.

One in the freedom of the truth,
One in the joy of paths untrod,
One in the soul's perennial youth,
One in the larger thought of God;—

The freer step, the fuller breath,
The wide horizon's grander view,
The sense of life that knows no death,—
The life that maketh all things new.

SAMUEL LONGFELLOW, 1874.

QUESTIONS

10. What is the derivation of the words "Unitarian" and "Trinitarian"? What does the word "Orthodox" signify?

Why should we be loyal to our truth? Why to our Church? In what ways can we show our loyalty? Should we not strive in every way to spread what we believe the highest form of religion? What form of religion appeals most to fear? Which to love? How did Christianity spread? Do we need a missionary spirit?

11. Why is it better to emphasize inspiration rather than salvation? How many Unitarians can you name

who were prominent in their fields of labor? How do they teach brotherhood? What is the aim of the Unitarian Church? What is a living church?

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LESSON V

THE BIBLE

Wisdom of Solomon 7:27. *And from generation to generation passing into holy souls Wisdom maketh men friends of God and prophets.*

12. Unitarians regard the Bible as a book which brings us near to God by placing us in communion with some of the deepest and loftiest thoughts and experiences of mankind.

13. We believe the Bible an inspired book because it contains thoughts which come to men by inspiration. The Psalms, the Book of Job, Isaiah, the writings of Paul, and the words of Jesus were not merely the result of pure thinking, but came from the depth of the heart that was fixed on God.

14. But, though considering it an inspired book, Unitarians also regard the Bible as coming from human sources. It is full of human experience, sorrow, joy, temptation, sin, repentance, trust, hope, love. Coming from the deepest places in man's heart, it goes to the deepest places. It has its heights and depths, its lofty mountain-tops and its level barren plains. It is human,

therefore fallible. Written by many men and at different times, it is of very various application and value. There is little that is edifying for us in some parts. Our Bible opens naturally at the Psalms, the Sermon on the Mount, the parables of Jesus, the ardent utterances of the soul of Paul.

15. Unitarians do not believe in the infallibility of the Bible. Inspiration leads to the sight of truth and reality, but not necessarily to a perfectly accurate description of what is seen. But these errors of expression do not detract from the authority of the Bible as a teacher of the best moral and spiritual truth.

16. It took a long time for the Hebrews to decide just what books should be included in the Old Testament and for the Christians to decide what should be included in the New. The Bible, therefore, is a growth in conception and compilation. The real value of the Bible for us is not primarily in the development of thought and life that it reveals, nor in its literary power, but that it is the one book containing the best expression of the principles of Christianity and the ideals which prepared the way for it.

17. Unitarians also see a difference in the moral and religious teaching of different parts of the Bible. The Old Testament teaches a different doctrine from the New in regard to God, duty,

and immortality. The truth unfolds itself gradually to human eyes; and the human race may say, as Paul said, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child; now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things (I Corinthians 13:11).

The Unitarian objections to the doctrine of infallible inspiration of the Scripture are such as these:—

(a) *The Scripture nowhere claims or assumes infallibility.* The texts usually relied on (II Timothy 3:16 and II Peter 1:21) teach that the Prophets and Apostles were inspired, but do not assert that their inspiration made them infallible.

(b) *The Scripture contains errors and contradictions which are fatal to the theory of its infallibility.* But if its authority consists in its being more full of truth and goodness than any other book, then its errors of detail cannot shake its divine power over the mind and heart.

(c) *The Apostle Paul distinctly declares the partial, provisional, and temporary nature of that which he teaches.* Having said (I Corinthians 2:10–16) that he is inspired and led by the Spirit to know and to speak Christian truth, he adds, in the same Epistle (I Corinthians 13:8–12), that all knowledge, so far as we are able to state it, is partial. relative, and incomplete, and will be done away.

The Word of God

It sounds along the ages,
  Soul answering to soul;
It kindles on the pages
  Of every Bible scroll;
The Psalmists heard and sang it,
  From martyr-lips it broke,
And prophet-tongues outrang it
  Till sleeping nations woke.

It dates each new ideal,—
  Itself it knows not time;
Man's laws but catch the music
  Of its eternal chime.
It calls—and lo, new Justice!
  It speaks—and lo, new Truth!
In ever nobler stature
  And unexhausted youth.

It everywhere arriveth;
  Recks not of small and great;
It shapes the unborn atom,
  It tells the sun its fate.
The wing-beat of archangel
  Its boundary never nears;
Forever on it soundeth
  The music of the spheres!

FREDERICK L. HOSMER

QUESTIONS

12. What does the Bible contain? How does it bring us near to God? Do other books than the Bible also help us to feel near to him?

13. What is inspiration? Is the lasting and noble effect of inspiration a test of its truth?

14. Is the Bible also a natural book? Does it contain only good thoughts and tell only of good men? What does "fallible" mean? Are all parts of the Bible of equal value? What passages do you like best? Are they the same you preferred when a little child?

15. Are there also errors and contradictions in the Bible? What does a comparison of dates and statements in different books prove? Is the real value of the Bible thereby lessened?

16. What is the canon of the Old Testament? of the New Testament? How was each formed? What is the real value of the Bible for us?

17. Is all the moral and religious teaching of the Bible of the same importance? What is meant by "moral" and "religious"? Can you be moral without being religious? Which is the larger term? Have Unitarians always laid special stress on the need of morality? State distinctly the difference between plenary or infallible inspiration and inspiration. Have many nations their own Bibles? Are they of value to us? Does our own Bible lessen or gain in value because of the Unitarian view regarding it?

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LESSON VI

GOD

Acts 17:28. *In Him we live, and move, and have our being.*

18. Unitarians believe that God is one; that his highest attribute is love, and that his best name is "Father." The New Testament confirms this thought. It was the belief of Jesus and of the early Christians. For example—

(a) *As regards unity.*

Mark 12:29: Jesus answered, "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God, the Lord is one"; I Corinthians 8:6: "To us there is one God, the Father." Galatians 3:20: "God is one." Ephesians 4:6: "One God and Father of all."

(b) *That this one God is the Father.*

John 17:3: Jesus, praying to the Father, says, "This is life eternal, that they should know thee, THE ONLY TRUE GOD, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." John 10:29: "My Father, who hath given them unto me, is GREATER THAN ALL." John 14:28: "I go unto the Father; for the Father is greater than I."

(c) *That God the Father is almighty, omnipresent, and omniscient.*

Acts 17:27: God is not far from each one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being." I Corinthians 8:6: "One God, the Father, OF WHOM ARE ALL THINGS." I Corinthians 15:28: "And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, THAT GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL." Romans 11:36: "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things." Ephesians 4:6: "Who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

(d) *That God is essentially love, and that he loves all his creatures, both bad and good.*

I John 4:16: "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Matthew 5:44, 45: "Love your enemies . . . that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." I John 4:8: "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."

19. Unitarians believe that this thought of God is also confirmed by the best thought of our day. Our modern thought has not made any advance on the statement that "God is a Spirit." As a spiritual Being he appeals not merely to our minds and hearts, but to our whole nature. We find an element of purpose in evolution, a mind

back of all law that conceived law, and a will that it fulfilled. And because we feel this power of mind and heart and will, appealing to our own minds and hearts, worship becomes possible and prayer a reality. For the finite mind can communicate with the Infinite Mind, and God becomes not the Unknowable but the infinitely Knowable. Because we think of him as a spiritual being, rather than as a supernatural being, fear gives place to love. The love of God towards us is manifested not in taking away sorrow, or making life easy, or abolishing evil, but in the fact that in each event of life we may turn to him and find in him a source of power to help us to heroic endurance or achievement. He summons us to put forth our whole power. That is what Jesus demanded in his first Commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."

The Thought of God

One thought I have, my ample creed,
So deep it is and broad,
And equal to my every need,—
It is the thought of God.

Each morn unfolds some fresh surprise,
I feast at life's full board;

And rising in my inner skies
Shines forth the thought of God.

At night my gladness is my prayer;
I drop my daily load,
And every care is pillowed there
Upon the thought of God.

I ask not far before to see,
But take in trust my road;
Life, death, and immortality
Are in my thought of God.

To this their secret strength they owed
The martyr's path who trod;
The fountains of their patience flowed
From out their thought of God.

Be still the light upon my way,
My pilgrim staff and rod,
My rest by night, my strength by day,
O blessèd thought of God.

FREDERICK LUCIAN HOSMER, 1880.

QUESTIONS

18. Why is God's best name "Father"? Who first called him by that name? What was the Jewish idea of God? Is our idea of God unchangeable? What was your first idea? what is your present? what is the high-

est? Why do we like to use the Bible words in describing him? In learning Jesus' thought about God do we also learn what he thought about his own relation to God? What did he mean by "life eternal"? Which text of those given seems to you the plainest concerning the unity of God? Besides the Bible, what other evidences have we of the existence of God? Does science help to prove a God? Is God in the infinitely small as well as in the infinitely great things of nature? Would the Bible alone be sufficient evidence of his existence without the confirmation of science and philosophy? What does evolution teach you about God? Why is God essentially love? How does a loving disposition bring us near to God? Do you ever use any other name for God than Father?

19. In what respects does the Unitarian idea of God differ from the older so-called Orthodox idea? Is evolution the product of chance, or the fulfilment of a purpose? Does law imply a mind that conceived it? What makes worship possible? Do you think of God as Unknowable or Knowable? Why? Do pleasure and sorrow or the mastery of pleasure and sorrow better measure the value of life? What is the first Commandment of Jesus?

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LESSON VII

THE TRINITY

I Corinthians 8:6. *To us there is one God, the Father.*

20. The doctrine of the Trinity, as stated in the creeds of all the so-called Orthodox churches, is this: that there are three persons in the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—and that these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory, but distinguished by personal properties. The Athanasian Creed is the most distinct formula of this doctrine. It says: "The Catholic faith is this—that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance. For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one; the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal." This doctrine teaches that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet there are not three Gods, but one God. Each may be worshipped separately. Each has a separate

work and office, which must not be confounded with that of the others; for that would be the heresy of Sabellius, who confounded the persons. But we must not say that they are three persons, like Peter, James, and John; for that would be dividing the substance, which is another fatal heresy.

21. Unitarians reject the Church doctrine of the Trinity—

(a) *Because it is unintelligible.*

Although many attempts have been made to explain it, none have proved satisfactory. It therefore remains, even by the admission of its advocates, a mystery; and a mystery is something unintelligible, and therefore cannot be an object of belief.

(b) *Because the doctrine of the Trinity is nowhere plainly taught in the New Testament.*

This is admitted by many candid Trinitarians. Thus, Neander, a Trinitarian, says of this doctrine: "It is expressly held forth in no one particular passage of the New Testament." (Church History, Torrey's translation, vol. i. p. 572.) Many such testimonies might be adduced.

(c) *Because the texts quoted in support of the Trinity are inadequate or irrelevant.*

The famous text of the Three Witnesses has been shown so convincingly to be an interpolation, that it has been rejected by most Trinitarians and omitted in the Revised Version. The

Baptismal Formula (Matthew 28:19) and the Benediction (II Corinthians 13:14) are passages often brought forward as proofs of the Trinity. But in neither of them is it stated that the Son is God, or that the Holy Spirit is a person, or that these three are the one supreme God. That these passages should be constantly quoted as proofs of the doctrine of the Trinity shows that no real proof-texts of the doctrine can be found in the New Testament. They may seem to imply it to one who already believes that doctrine; but to those who do not already believe it they appear as a summary of the truth which proceeds from the Father, the only true God—through Jesus Christ, the mediator of his love—and made part of the soul and life by the inward influence of the Divine Spirit.

(d) *Because there are many texts in the New Testament plainly opposed to the doctrine of the Trinity.*

Such are the texts in which the Father is called the one or only God; which could not be said if the Son is also God, and the Holy Spirit God. I Corinthians 8:5, 6: "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as these are gods many and lords many), *but to us there is one God, the Father.*" Ephesians 4:6: "*One God and Father of all,* who is above all, and through all, and in you all." John 17:3: Jesus prays to the Father, saying, "Father! the

hour is come!" and immediately adds, "This is life eternal, *that they might know thee the only true God.*" Ephesians 5:20: The Apostle directs the Ephesians to give "thanks always, for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, *to God, even the Father.*"

If the Son were God, and the Holy Ghost God, it would be our duty to pray to them also. But all prayers are commanded to be addressed to the Father. See Matthew 6:9.

(e) *Because we know when and where the doctrine of the Trinity began, and how it gradually took form.*

In the famous Proem to his Gospel John opposes the idea that the Logos, or Word, was anything different from God himself. The Word, he tells us, is God speaking, first, in creation—"By him," God speaking, "were all things made." He refers here, no doubt, to the common phrases of the Old Testament—God said, "Let there be light"; "The Word of the Lord came to Isaiah"; etc. Secondly, the Word is God speaking in the soul—"That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Thirdly, the Word is God revealed in Jesus—"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." He thus teaches that as God speaks in creation and speaks in the human reason, he also speaks in Jesus more clearly and fully. But, as if to obviate the possibility of being understood to say that

Christ was God when he really says that God is in Christ, he adds, "No man hath *seen* God at any time."

This conception of Christ as a Logos, or Word of God, or a revelation of God, continued to be taught down to the time of the Synod of Nice (A. D. 325). The Apostles' Creed was not written by the Apostles, but in its substance it goes back to a very early Christian period. It contains no trace of the doctrine of the Trinity. It calls God "the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." The Nicene Creed, in its original form, knows nothing of the Trinity. It calls Jesus God, "but makes his divinity derived and dependent." It was not till the year 380, after much controversy and party strife, that the doctrine of the Trinity was established in the Church. In the year 383 Theodosius the Emperor threatened to punish all who did not accept this doctrine.

The Lord of All

Sing forth his high eternal name
  Who holds all powers in thrall,
Through endless ages still the same,—
  The mighty Lord of all.
His goodness, strong and measureless,
  Upholds us lest we fall;
His hand is still outstretched to bless,—
  The loving Lord of all.

His perfect law sets metes and bounds,
Our strong defense and wall;
His providence our life surrounds,—
The saving Lord of all.
He every thought and every deed
Doth to his judgment call;
O may our hearts obedient heed
The righteous God of all.

When, turning from forbidden ways,
Low at his feet we fall,
His strong and tender arms upraise,—
The pardoning Lord of all.
Unwearied he is working still,
Unspent his blessings fall,
Almighty, loving, righteous One,
The only Lord of all.

SAMUEL LONGFELLOW.

QUESTIONS

20. What is the most distinct formula of the Trinitarian creed? State it. Do the Trinitarians whom you know believe exactly that, or some modification of it? Why is it called *Athanasian* Creed? Who was the opposer of Athanasius? Who was emperor at that time? In what century was the Athanasian Creed adopted? Do you understand it? What do other people mean by it? Can you put it into words of your own, and yet keep sense in the words?

21. Why do Unitarians reject the doctrine of the Trinity? Can you believe what you do not understand? What does the phrase "reason in religion" mean? Should you reason about a passage in Scripture just as you would about a passage in any other book? What does Neander say about this doctrine? What famous text is interpolated? Do the Baptismal Formula and the Benediction state the doctrine of the Trinity? Must prejudice in favor of an opinion exclude examination of the grounds for belief? What texts prove the unity of God? To whom should we pray? Can you trace the growth of the doctrine of the Trinity? What were the three ways in which John said that God revealed himself? What was the Logos? When and what was the Synod of Nice? What is the Nicene Creed? Has the Apostles' Creed any hint of the Trinity? Do not many Trinitarians therefore acknowledge that the doctrine of the Trinity is only a Church doctrine? In what year was it finally established?

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LESSON VIII

JESUS CHRIST

John 14:6. *I am the Way, and the Truth and the Life.*

22. Unitarians believe that Jesus was a man, human in soul and body, born like other human beings and sharing the common destiny of all men. Unitarians believe that to attribute to Jesus supernatural powers is to rob him of the power of example. They believe that all men may grow up into the stature of Jesus: that his power lay in his spiritual and moral nature: that his true greatness was in his devotion to the service of God, his sympathy with humanity, his manliness and fidelity under all conditions, his readiness for all kinds of service and his courage in great suffering.

To Unitarians Jesus was a divine man, not a human God, and in so far as men are, like him, of Godlike nature, they also are divine. Paul wrote of the followers of Jesus, "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" All the experiences of Jesus reveal the intimate union of his soul with

the Infinite Spirit, an intimacy which he desired to communicate to all his fellow-creatures. The Scripture teaches that (1) all that Jesus had, he received from God; and (2) that all he received, he received in order to impart it to his fellow-men.

23. Unitarians therefore believe in Jesus as a man raised up to be the interpreter, inspirer and transmitter of the divine life to his fellow-men; but they do not believe that he was God—

(a) *Because Jesus is always represented as speaking of himself as a man, and is always so spoken of in the New Testament.*

(b) *Because we find no account in Scripture that a revelation of his deity was ever made to the disciples.*

When Jesus said, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30), he meant one in sympathy, not in essence; since he prayed (John 17:11) that his disciples might be one even as he and the Father were one. He certainly could not have intended to ask that his disciples might be one in essence.

They regarded their Master as a man, but wiser and better than themselves. We should surely have found in the New Testament some trace of the astonishment and awe which must have come upon them if the wonderful fact had been communicated to them that their Master was the Supreme God.

(c) *Because we find no opposition made by the Jews to this doctrine.*

Nothing could have seemed more abhorrent to the Jewish mind than to be told that Jesus was the Supreme Jehovah. On one occasion they falsely bring the charge that Jesus, being a man, made himself God (John 10:33). Jesus, instead of saying, "Yes! I am God," answers by quoting a passage in the Old Testament, where those to whom the word of God came were called gods, and then says that he had only called himself the Son of God. After this no such charge was made by the Jews. We find many accusations made against the Apostles, but they are never charged with calling their Master the Supreme God. They were only commanded not to teach in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:18, 5:40).

(d) *Because Jesus plainly distinguishes himself from God.*

See John 13:3, 16:27; Mark 10:18; Matthew 27:46; John 17:7.

(e) *Because God is called the God of Jesus Christ.*

See II Corinthians 11:31; Ephesians 1:3, 17; Romans 15:6; I Peter 1:3; Hebrews 1:2, 9.

(f) *Because the Scriptures teach that there is one God, who is distinct from the Christ.*

See I Corinthians 8:6; I Timothy 2:5; Ephesians 4:5, 6.

(g) *Because the highest powers and glory ascribed to Christ are said to be given to him by God.*

See Philippians 2:9; Colossians 1:19; Acts 2:36, 3:13, 5:31; Matthew 28:18; John 5:19; Ephesians 1:22; etc.

(h) *Because Jesus himself teaches his subordination to God.*

See John 14:28; Matthew 20:23; Mark 13:32; John 10:29.

(i) *Because Jesus prayed to God.*

See Luke 6:12; Matthew 11:25; Luke 22:42; Hebrews 5:7.

(j) *Because he commands us to pray, not to himself, but to God.*

See John 4:23, 16:23; Luke 11:1, 2.

The way, the truth, the life.

O thou great friend to all the sons of men,
Who once appeared in humblest guise below,
Sin to rebuke, to break the captive's chain,
And call thy brethren forth from want and woe!

We look to thee: thy truth is still the light
Which guides the nations, groping on their way,
Stumbling and falling in disastrous night,
Yet hoping ever for the perfect day.

Yes: thou art still the life; thou art the way
The holiest know,—light, life, and way of heaven;
And they who dearest hope, and deepest pray,
Toil by the light, life, way, which thou hast given.

THEODORE PARKER, 1846.

QUESTIONS

22. Do Unitarians consider Jesus as a finite being? Was he a human being? made like ourselves? In what sense is Jesus the ideal man? What is the difference between the ideal Christ and the historic Jesus? In what did his real greatness consist? What is the difference between the divinity of Jesus and the deity of Jesus? Which way of regarding him would make him of most help to you? What did Jesus mean by saying, "I and my Father are one"? Are we not sons of God, and at times one with him? Can you hope to grow like him?

23. How did Jesus speak of himself? How did the disciples regard him? What is the difference between belief in Jesus and belief about him?

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LESSON IX

THE TEACHING OF JESUS

Philippians 2:5. *Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*

24. As Unitarians believe that Jesus was a man it does not trouble them that some of his ideas, like the expectation that the end of the world was near, were mistaken. Jesus shared in many respects the opinions of his day, and some of his precepts had an oriental coloring which makes it impossible for us to accept them literally. The value of his teachings lies in their spiritual validity. They summoned the finest qualities in the disciples to hasten, by their service, the coming of the Kingdom of God, and the parables in wonderful word pictures brought home to the disciples the nature of that kingdom. In his teachings he emphasized the nobler and more abundant life of the individual. There was little new in his teachings, but his disciples found in them the possibilities of a life with God through loving obedience and neighborly service. The emphasis that Jesus placed was not on outward profession, but on the need of doing the will of

God. He made heavy demands on his disciples. He demanded that his teachings be embodied in life.

25. Unitarians believe that the four Gospels contain an adequate historical account of the life, teaching and character of Jesus. The first three, because they present a similar point of view, are called the Synoptic Gospels, and because written earlier than the Fourth are referred to for the most accurate account of the life and teachings of Jesus. The Fourth Gospel represents a later tradition and philosophy and it is written to prove a theory. But they all show that the power of the truth Jesus taught was subordinate to the power he was. The disciples could not always understand his teaching but they always felt the power of his spiritual authority.

26. The primary value of the truth of Jesus lies in the great purpose that ennobled it. Many in every walk of life have felt the power of that statement in the Fourth Gospel: "To this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth," and they have felt, in every field of labor and in all their relations with others, they might in the spirit of Jesus bear witness to the truth.

There are many sayings of Jesus inexpressibly dear to the hearts of men. The Beatitudes and the Golden Rule, the need of letting the light within shine, the emphasis on purity of heart,

the warning to avoid even the intention of evil, the request to do more than the law requires, the warning against hypocrisy, the command to seek first the Kingdom of God, the testing of life by its fruits, the ideal of the strong man who built his house upon the rock—these and many more show the close connection of his teaching with life, and every one who stands firm in his loyalty to God is obeying his teachings.

Christ in the city

Where cross the crowded ways of life,
  Where sound the cries of race and clan,
Above the noise of selfish strife,
  We hear thy voice, O Son of Man.

In haunts of wretchedness and need,
  On shadowed thresholds dark with fears,
From paths where hide the lures of greed,
  We catch the vision of thy tears.

From tender childhood's helplessness,
  From woman's grief, man's burdened toil,
From famished souls, from sorrow's stress,
  Thy heart has never known recoil.

The cup of water given for thee
  Still holds the freshness of thy grace;

Yet long these multitudes to see
The sweet compassion of thy face.

O Master, from the mountain side,
Make haste to heal these hearts of pain;
Among these restless throngs abide,
O tread the city's streets again;

Till sons of men shall learn thy love,
And follow where thy feet have trod;
Till glorious from thy heaven above,
Shall come the City of our God.

FRANK MASON NORTH, 1905.

QUESTIONS

24. Do you believe the sayings of Jesus merely because he uttered them? Should we expect a man who lived two thousand years ago to know and express truth that would solve our modern problems? Is his solution of his problems necessarily the solution of ours? What is the real value of his teachings? What was their central idea? What was he striving for? What new vista of life did he open for his disciples? Where did he place the emphasis in individual life?

25. How does the Fourth Gospel differ from the other three? What do all four show?

26. What is the primary value of his truth for us? What are your favorite sayings of Jesus? What help have you received from them?

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LESSON X

THE WORK OF JESUS

John 1:4. *In him was life; and the life was the light of men.*

27. Unitarians believe that Jesus felt himself to be sent to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10): to give rest to the weary and heavy laden (Matthew 11:28): to carry up to a higher morality the law of duty (Matthew 5:18, 20, 21, 27, 33, 39, 44): to sacrifice himself for the good of others (Matthew 20:28): to preach good news to the poor, freedom to the captives, sight to the blind, and comfort to the sorrowing (Luke 4:18, 7:22): to reveal the Fatherly love of God (Matthew 11:27). Among Unitarians there are differing explanations of these texts; but all agree that the essential mission of Jesus is to make men better, wiser, and happier in this world and the next.

28. Unitarians find a different emphasis in the work of Jesus than others find. Conservative Christians believe the chief work of Jesus was to save men from sin, but Unitarians believe it was to inspire men to lead useful and honorable lives. Men were to build or hasten the coming

of the Kingdom of God through righteousness, and religion is not merely a remedy to cure a diseased soul but also a power to develop the strength men already have. The chief work of Jesus was not to keep men out of the kingdom of Satan, but to make them worthy members of the Kingdom of God.

29. Jesus did this work through his teaching, his life and his sufferings. His teaching shows us that right and wrong are rooted in the nature of man and in the laws which he obeys, and he states the laws of moral consequence in human life. "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted." "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." With what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged." "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit." "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." In all such passages Jesus is stating the working of everlasting laws.

30. The life of Jesus reveals the power of a life given to the service of man and God. He went about doing good. The most wretched were not beyond the bounds of his compassion. He welcomed children and ministered to all sorts and conditions of men. He ministered to the physical as well as to the intellectual and spiritual needs

of men. He had some power of healing, though its methods are not clearly revealed. Unitarians generally however do not believe in miracles. A miracle is something that excites wonder. The deepest wonder comes from knowledge rather than from ignorance. The world is a source of wonder. The flower is a miracle. Life is a miracle. But this is not the sense in which this word is used in the New Testament and in church history. There it refers to a power within man to rise superior to the laws of nature, as the water, we are told, under the influence of Jesus, became wine. We do not find that as man becomes more spiritual he attains this power, and many Unitarians look upon the miracles as legendary additions to the Gospels, and therefore care little for them. They do not believe that Christianity depends on them, and they prefer to emphasize the spiritual power of Jesus —the power that came from communion with God, that sent him forth in service, enabled him to reveal the divine in the human, and drew, has drawn and will draw men unto him and inspire them to grow more and more into his likeness.

Unitarians do not believe that any form of spiritual healing exists wholly apart from physical. They believe that mind and body help soul, and soul helps mind and body, but they demand that all three as far as possible should work together. True Christianity demands our care for

body, mind and soul, that man may be a sturdy messenger of God. That, we believe, was the service of Jesus.

31. Jesus also helped men through his sufferings. He teaches others effectively because he lived what he taught, and without the power of the Cross Christianity could not have survived. Unitarians attach a spiritual rather than a doctrinal meaning to it. It is for them an inspiration to self-mastery and religious aspiration rather than an assurance that the world was saved from sin and its consequences. It was the act by which the world was won to his teaching and his life.

Our Brother Christ

We bear the strain of earthly care,
But bear it not alone;
Beside us walks our brother Christ
And makes our task his own.

Through din of market, whirl of wheels,
And thrust of driving trade,
We follow where the Master leads,
Serene and unafraid.

The common hopes that make us men
Were his in Galilee;

The tasks he gives are those he gave
Beside the restless sea.

Our brotherhood still rests in him,
The Brother of us all,
And o'er the centuries still we hear
The Master's winsome call.

Ozora Stearns Davis, 1909.

QUESTIONS

27. In what general ideas concerning the work of Jesus do all agree? What Bible verses express these ideas? Do you think you are any happier or better because of Jesus' life? Why is it that wickedness, misery, war, still exist? State in your own words what you think Jesus wanted to do for the world. How far do you think he accomplished it?

28. What was the chief work of Jesus? Is it wiser and kinder in Jesus to have worked only to make men better in this life? If better in this life, will they necessarily be better hereafter? Must we try to do what is right *now?* Shall we then be happy now or by and by?

29. What are the three ways in which Jesus helps us? What sayings of Jesus show he believed in the necessary moral consequences of right and wrong? Why do we say *moral* consequences? Does not evil-doing sometimes seem to succeed for a little while? Does it ever have even worldly success in the end?

30. How does the life of Jesus supplement his teaching, and what does his life prove about our own capac-

ities? Is goodness a reality that can be obtained? Is there any point at which to stop in being good? Is it easy to try to be like Jesus? Is it easy to be really like him? Would it have been easier centuries ago than it is now? Are we to imitate his example exactly? What are we then to do? Is it not his spirit as shown in his life that we should imitate?

What is the Unitarian attitude toward the miracles? Do you think they are important? Does Christianity depend on them?

What is the relation between the physical and the spiritual? What is mental healing? Is it ever alone effective?

31. What is the power of the Cross? What meaning do Unitarians attach to it? Which word seems to you best to describe Jesus, Teacher, Brother, Master or Man of sorrows? Does your attitude toward him depend on which word you use?

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LESSON XI

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Galatians 5:22. *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control.*

32. Unitarians believe that the Holy Spirit is not a separate person in the Godhead, but the influence of God's spirit on the human soul, to give strength, peace, light, love. It is said to be poured out, shed abroad, given, etc.; which expressions apply to an influence, but not to a person.

33. Unitarians believe this influence to be given by a constant operation, wherever the human heart is prepared and ready to receive it. Therefore Christians are told to "live in the Spirit," to "walk in the Spirit," and the Spirit is said to "dwell in them." It is given not only to Prophets and Apostles, to saints and martyrs, but to all who desire help to lead better lives.

34. The difference between the influence of the Spirit of God and other influences which come from him is this—that whereas the others come to us from without, through nature, events, and

our fellow-men, the influence of the Spirit is God speaking to us within the soul. We commune with God outwardly through his works and through the events of our earthly life. We commune with Him inwardly when we are by ourselves, and when in the secret chamber of our hearts we lift up our thoughts and wishes to our Heavenly Father.

35. The Holy Spirit is that which makes all people, races and religions one, however different they may appear. It is that unity which is behind all diversity. That is why it is a revelation of God himself. All humanity shares it. It is there beyond all that seems to separate us. Sympathy is the first approach to it, but love is the realization of it. The Holy Spirit is at the heart of the world and they only know it who bring their hearts to it.

Inspiration

Life of ages, richly poured,
Love of God, unspent and free,
Flowing in the prophet's word
And the people's liberty,—

Never was to chosen race
That unstinted tide confined;
Thine is every time and place
Fountain sweet of heart and mind.

Breathing in the thinker's creed
Pulsing in the hero's blood,
Nerving simplest thought and deed,
Freshening time with truth and good,

Consecrating art and song,
Holy book and pilgrim track,
Hurling floods of tyrant wrong
From the sacred limits back,—

Life of ages, richly poured,
Love of God, unspent and free,
Flow still in the prophet's word
And the people's liberty.

SAMUEL JOHNSON, 1864.

QUESTIONS

32. Is the Holy Spirit a separate person in the Godhead? What is it? What are the words used about it which show that it is an influence?

33. How is this influence given? Do some people think it depends upon arbitrary or miraculous causes, or that God gives it only to certain persons? When do we think it comes to us? Must we prepare ourselves for it? How can we do that? Is it given to us all? Have you ever seen people in whose faces it shines, and have you heard it in their voices? What is your own word for Holy Spirit? Don't you know it when you see it in some little child who is sick and patient, or brave

in danger? Does it not always inspire respect? If we are told to "walk in the Spirit," does it not show that it is an every-day holy possession?

34. What is the difference between the influence of the Spirit of God and other influences coming from Him? Does such spirit within us grow by communion? Does our own spirit influence that of our friends? Does God's spirit influence us in a similar way? Does it give the best and deepest happiness to feel the influence of God is over us, and through it we may help others?

35. What most separates us from others? What best unites us? What best enables us to realize unity?

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LESSON XII

THE NATURE OF MAN

Romans 8:19. *For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God.*

36. Unitarians believe that in all men there are religious capacities, by which they may come into communion with God. These are reason, conscience, freedom, love of truth, of beauty, of goodness, the sense of the infinite, the capability of disinterested love; and the kindred sentiments of veneration, awe and aspiration. These are found, more or less developed, in all men, and where properly educated and unfolded make the true dignity and worth of human nature.

It is said (Romans 1:19, 20) that all men have a sufficient knowledge of God to enable them to obey and love him; and in Romans 2:14, that the heathen "do by nature the things contained in the law." The case of Cornelius the Roman (Acts 10:1) leads Peter to say that good men, in all nations, are acceptable to God (Acts 10:34).

37. Unitarians reject the Calvinistic doctrines of original sin and total depravity, the responsibil-

ity of the human race for Adam's fall, and the belief that, until converted, man is under the wrath of God. They maintain, on the contrary, that if there is hereditary depravity, there is also inherited goodness; that such phrases as "the wrath of God" are figurative, and cannot apply to the Eternal Goodness.

That man in his natural state has the power to do right, and that such right-doing is well pleasing to God, appears from such passages as these: the parable of the Sower, where the seed (the Word) falls into "the good ground" of "an honest and good heart" (Luke 8:15): the passages which teach that the spirits of little children see God, face to face (Matthew 18:10, 19:14): the parable of the Good Samaritan and that of the Pharisee and Publican (Luke 10:30, 18:9), where the good qualities of heretics and outsiders are commended by Jesus. And see especially the account of the Day of Judgment, where the heathen who did good actions without having heard of Jesus, are placed among his sheep.

38. When Unitarians speak of "the dignity of human nature," they do not mean the dignity of man in his actual condition, but of man as God means him to be and has enabled him to become. We find in all men powers and faculties which unite them with eternity no less than with time. We have within us reason, which is capable of

seeking and finding the noblest truths. We have conscience, which shows us the difference between right and wrong. We have the power of freedom, by which we can choose good and refuse evil. We have the sense of the beautiful, the true and the good; and a longing for what is unchanging and eternal. These powers, which are in all men, constitute the dignity of human nature, and make it capable of perpetual progress.

39. The divinity of man, however, is best shown in his conflict with his environment, and the nobler he shows himself to be in the midst of trying circumstances, the greater he appears. If he can lose or gain all and still preserve his manly nature, he reveals something of the power that was in Jesus. But to rise to the emergency he must build up this diviner spirit from day to day in familiar tasks. That is the way Jesus did. That is the way we may be like him.

Where I may find Him

Go not, my soul, in search of him,
Thou wilt not find him there,—
Or in the depths of shadow dim,
Or heights of upper air.

For not in far-off realms of space
The Spirit hath its throne;
In every heart it findeth place
And waiteth to be known.

Thought answereth alone to thought,
And Soul with soul hath kin;
The outward God he findeth not
Who finds not God within.

And if the vision come to thee
Revealed by inward sign,
Earth will be full of Deity
And with his glory shine!

Thou shalt not want for company,
Nor pitch thy tent alone;
The indwelling God will go with thee,
And show thee of his own.

Then go not thou in search of him,
But to thyself repair;
Wait thou within the silence dim,
And thou shalt find him there!

FREDERICK L. HOSMER, 1879.

QUESTIONS

36. Through what capacities within us do we come into communion with God? Have all the same capacities? What passages in the New Testament show how its writers felt? Could you not say the same from your own experience?

37. What is meant by original sin and total depravity? Did Jesus or Calvin teach such doctrines? Why do not Unitarians believe them? What is hereditary

depravity? What parables of Jesus show his belief about man? What is human nature? Is there a mixture of good and bad in you?

38. Can character conquer evil inheritance? Is evil inheritance to be forgiven and struggled against? Will circumstances conquer you, or will you conquer them? What is noble self-development? Has God made you capable of it? Is its test to do as much as some one else, or as much as you can? Are comparison with others and self-examination wise?

39. What is meant by the "dignity of human nature"? What four faculties indicate this dignity? Is such dignity in you, in bad people, in savages? Is there any reason why it should not be in all?

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LESSON XIII

ATONEMENT, CONVERSION AND REGENERATION

Luke 17:21. *For lo, the Kingdom of God is within you.*

40. The doctrines of atonement, conversion, and regeneration all spring from the idea of man's weakness rather than of his strength. They came to Christianity from Paul rather than from Jesus. Paul felt deeply the weight of sin, Jesus, the power of eternal life. Unitarians cannot believe that God needed the sacrifice of Jesus to appease his wrath, and place little value, therefore, on the doctrine of the atonement. They believe that it is an outgrowth of past conceptions which men have in large measure abandoned, and that God needed not to be reconciled to man, nor man to God. They believe that man's thought and life and love need to be purified by the higher thought and life and love of God, and they regard the death of Jesus not as a sacrifice to appease the divine wrath, but as a splendid fulfilment of a life given for others.

41. Conversion and regeneration are words

which have also largely lost their earlier significance. Many souls have deep religious experiences, but Unitarians do not speak of these experiences as conversions. They recognize that at such times men have felt the power and love of God filling and animating their souls, and so have found themselves eager to proclaim anew the spirit of Jesus in words of faith and deeds of love.

42. "Regeneration" is the Scripture word used to signify the new life which has its source not only in the sight of God's law but also in that of God's love.

A converted man is one who has determined to do right and has begun to do right. The regenerate man is one in whom the habit of right-doing is established—one who has come to *love* it, and to whom it is no effort.

Coworkers with God

Creation's Lord, we give thee thanks
That this thy world is incomplete;
That battle calls our marshalled ranks,
That work awaits our hands and feet;

That thou hast not yet finished man,
That we are in the making still,—
As friends who share the Maker's plan,
As sons who know the Father's will.

Beyond the present sin and shame,
Wrong's bitter, cruel, scorching blight,
We see the beckoning vision flame,
The blessed kingdom of the Right.

What though the Kingdom long delay,
And still with haughty foes must cope?
It gives us that for which to pray,
A field for toil and faith and hope.

Since what we choose is what we are,
And what we love we yet shall be,
The goal may ever shine afar,—
The will to win it makes us free.

WILLIAM DE WITT HYDE, 1903.

QUESTIONS

41. What is the derivation of "Regeneration"? When does it come into the religious life? What is the "new life"? When we are wrong, what must we do? How do spiritual love and joy come to us? Unless we have turned ourselves towards the right can such love and joy come to us? Must the main purpose of your life always be noble and pure? Do our experience and sympathy help others? What helps men most to grow in the love of man and God?

42. Do many Christians believe that God was angry with man, and that his wrath was only appeased by the death of Christ? What is meant by "vicarious atone-

ment?'' How does such a doctrine agree with the Unitarian idea of God? Is it God that must change in order to forgive us, or we in order to be forgiven? Are two parties necessary to a reconciliation? If the offender repents and tries to make up for the wrong he has done, to atone, is it necessary that any change should come over the other party, which has done no wrong? Is not glad forgiveness all that is due? Is the Unitarian idea of reconciliation a necessary consequence of its idea of God and man? What do you think of the Orthodox idea of Divine justice, that could not forgive men until Christ had died, and also that without Christ's death, God could not have forgiven the millions who were born before him? Does it add to the confusion of the idea of the Trinity, that an Infinite sacrifice, God the Son, was needed to appease the wrath of an Infinite God the Father?

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LESSON XIV

PRAYER

Romans 8:15. *For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

43. Prayer is turning to God and speaking to him in full confidence that he will listen. It is the communion of the finite with the Infinite Spirit. This is the heart of prayer. An active, hopeful reliance on God so opens the soul that his life flows in and gives us strength. Jesus says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matthew 7:7, 8).

When the disciples came to their Master, and said, "Lord, teach us to pray," his answer was in the words which we to this day call the "Lord's Prayer" (Luke 11:2–4). The first preparation for prayer is to wish to love and to serve God. But the first impulse to pray comes often from thought that the path of life is difficult, as the

soldier finds it difficult in the midst of the battle and seeks the help of a nature higher than his own. Finding help in the greater crises of life, we feel the power of prayer in the lesser, and more readily grow into its use. If we have no desire to pray, we do not really appreciate our opportunities or our diviner possibilities. Prayer does not make the path of duty any less difficult, but it inspires us to take that path, however difficult. Prayer always enables us to fight our battles with the help of a power beyond our own, and whether we succeed or fail, because we feel that we are working with God, the peace of God is there.

To pray aright we must be sincere. Jesus says, "God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). We must not say with our lips the prayer which we do not feel with our hearts. When we are happy our joy may overflow to the Heavenly Friend from whom all our blessings come; when we are unhappy we may pray to the same loving Friend for comfort. When we are away from God we must pray to be brought back again; and when we have sinned we shall find no peace until we have asked our Father to forgive us and to help us to be again his obedient children.

44. *Objects of Prayer.*—The chief objects of prayer are spiritual. We ask God for strength, peace, purity, love—that is, for the Holy Spirit.

We know that to do any duty effectually it should be done in the right spirit. But we cannot always obtain a right spirit by an effort of the will. We may be depressed, or anxious, or vexed, or irritated. In that case this bad spirit will go into our words and actions, and prevent us from exercising the good influence we really have at heart. But if we open our soul to God, and ask him to help us to feel right in order to do right, we may be sure that this help will come.

May we also ask for outward blessings? Some good and wise persons think that we ought not. They consider it selfish to do so, and they also believe that this is asking God to suspend the action of his universal laws. Others, however, say that we may ask God for anything we desire, and that God wishes to have us do so; just as a good father and mother like to have their children bring to them all the wishes of their heart.

45. *Times of Prayer.*—It may be well to have some fixed times for prayer—for example, the beginning of the day, when we are about to resume the duties of life, and need to go to them in a right spirit; and at the close of the day, when we may look back and thank God for what he has helped us to be and do, and ask his forgiveness for our failures. It is also desirable to pray, even for a moment, before any work which requires preparation that it may be done aright.

46. *Answer to Prayer.*—Some Unitarians be-

lieve that the only answer to prayer is the good influence which the thought of God's presence exercises on the soul. In this sense prayer is the same as contemplation, or meditation. Others, however, believe that by a law of the Divine government prayer puts the soul into such a relation with God that we can receive a direct influence from him. This law requires us to ask as the condition of receiving some special blessing, which we should not be in a condition to receive unless we pray for it. This makes a real communion between God and the soul.

The Clouds of Doubt

'Twixt gleams of joy and clouds of doubt
Our feelings come and go;
Our best estate is tossed about
In ceaseless ebb and flow;

No mood of feeling, form of thought,
Is constant for a day;
But thou, O Lord! thou changest not;
The same thou art alway.

Let me no more my comfort draw
From my frail hold of thee,—
In this alone rejoice with awe;
Thy mighty grasp of me.

Lay hold of me with thy strong grasp,
Let thine almighty arm
In its embrace my weakness clasp,
And I shall fear no harm.

Thy purpose of eternal good
Let me but surely know;
On this I'll lean, let changing mood
And feeling come or go;

Glad when thy sunshine fills my soul;
Not lorn when clouds o'ercast;
Since thou within thy sure control
Of love dost hold me fast.

JOHN CAMPBELL SHAIRP, 1871.

QUESTIONS

43. What is prayer? How does reliance on God affect our praying? What words of Jesus insist on such reliance? Do you often repeat the Lord's Prayer? What should be the preparation for prayer? What often stirs the first impulse to pray? What help may we expect from prayer?

44. What are the chief objects of prayer? Does prayer help our feeble will? Is it selfish to ask for outward blessings? Does such asking mean that God's laws should be altered for our sake? How does a knowledge of God's laws as seen through nature and in science affect our prayers? Might we not

ask God for everything, just as we ask our parents because we tell them all that is in our hearts?

45. Is it helpful to form habits of prayer? Do you find it hard to pray? What do you think most helps men to form and continue the habit?

46. What is one answer to prayer? Do you believe that prayer is more than meditation? Why is communion more than meditation? How do you like this definition, "Prayer is resolve with the thought of God in it?" Can one's whole life be such a prayer that words are seldom used? With the Unitarian idea of God and man, is it very natural to pray? Is prayer adoration, gratitude, trust? Can we pray for each other? for the dead?

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LESSON XV

THE CHURCH

Matthew 18:20. *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.*

47. Unitarians believe that the Church is a union of those who come together to help each other and the world at large to live a Christian life. The essential character of a church is stated by Jesus when he says, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

To meet in the name of Jesus is to meet in his spirit, to do his work. To pray in his name is to pray in the same spirit in which he prayed.

48. Unitarians believe that the work of the Church is to bring people together for public worship, to educate the young and ignorant, to strengthen the weak, and to co-operate in all attempts to elevate and improve the community. For this reason they look forward to the time when all churches shall unite together in the

purpose of doing good, so that at last God's kingdom may come, and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

49. Unitarians generally accept the two ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, not as essential to spiritual life, but as helps to it. They regard both, not as ends, but as means. They consider them as natural symbols and outward images of inward feeling and purpose. If practised merely as forms, without this inward application, their value is gone.

50. Baptism, or the external application of water, expresses the desire that the infant or adult baptized may be surrounded by those outward Christian influences which conduce to purity of character and conduct. Water is the natural symbol of purity.

In baptizing infants, Unitarians do not intend to express a belief that this outward act can have any direct effect on the soul of the child. No Unitarian accepts the doctrine of regeneration by baptism in any such sense as this. But by this rite we express our belief that the child is already dear to God, and we baptize him as an expression of our wish that he may have the help which comes from union with the Christian Church, and our desire that his parents and all others may be faithful in surrounding him with Christian influences, and educating him in the Christian life.

51. The Lord's Supper is the symbol of Christian brotherhood. It also recalls the life and personality of Jesus and reminds us that we also are workers in the same great cause which claimed all his loyalty and sacrifice. It reminds us of what Jesus gave for the cause of humanity and of how much more we ought to give. It is thus a feast of remembrance, and has a tendency to produce and maintain a living sense of our personal relation to Jesus as teacher, friend and inspirer. Unitarians usually invite all those who desire to remember Jesus to unite with them in this service. They do not consider it intended for church members, or professing Christians only, but for "Whosoever will."

These two ordinances of the Christian Church, having been continued from the beginning, unite successive generations of Christians with each other as well as with their common Master.

52. Unitarians having originated among the Congregationalists, are independent in their form of church government, and are therefore called Congregationalists. Each church is independent of others, though ready to unite with them in work and sympathy. For these purposes they meet at stated times in local Conferences, and in the meetings of the American Unitarian Association and other national societies.

The Church Universal

One holy Church of God appears
Through every age and race,
Unwasted by the lapse of years,
Unchanged by changing place.

From oldest time, on farthest shores,
Beneath the pine or palm,
One Unseen Presence she adores,
With silence or with psalm.

Her priests are all God's faithful sons,
To serve the world raised up;
The pure in heart her baptized ones;
Love, her communion-cup.

The truth is her prophetic gift,
The soul her sacred page;
And feet on mercy's errands swift
Do make her pilgrimage.

O living Church! thine errand speed;
Fulfil thy task sublime;
With bread of life earth's hunger feed;
Redeem the evil time!

SAMUEL LONGFELLOW, 1860.

QUESTIONS

47. What is the Church? What verse states its character? What is meant by meeting or praying in the "name of Christ"?

48. What do Unitarians regard as the work of the Church? Have churches been established on points of doctrine alone? Have those who were "regenerate" wished to exclude the "unregenerate"? Have such felt that all those who took part in Church work must take part in the sacraments?

49. How do Unitarians regard Baptism and the Lord's Supper? Are they of use if practised merely as forms?

50. What does Baptism express? Why is water used in its service? Does the outward act of baptism affect the child? Is the act really an expression of a wish for the child's welfare and for the parents' success in educating him religiously?

51. Of what is the Lord's Supper a sign and symbol? How is it a "feast of remembrance"? For whom is the Supper intended? What is, after all, the great test by which one may become a church member?

52. What is the Unitarian form of church government? Does our method of government show belief in freedom and in individual responsibility? Are many Trinitarian churches "Congregational?" Does the word "Congregationalism" describe our *church polity*? Is the word "Unitarianism" our *doctrinal title*?

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LESSON XVI

CREEDS

Mark 12:29–31. *The first commandment is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The second is this, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*

53. A creed is good as a guide or compass, but the important thing for the individual or the church is not the creed but the purpose. The creed has changed in expression or interpretation from time to time, but the purpose of the church, though it has had varied expressions, has been one in all the centuries. It has been the service of man and the worship of God. We must teach men the great purpose of the church and the vision that will inspire them to fulfill that purpose. Sometimes the creed well summarizes the vision. To such creeds Unitarians do not object. Many of their churches have accepted such statements. One which has been popular is the following:

We believe in the Fatherhood of God,
The Brotherhood of Man,
The Leadership of Jesus,
Salvation by Character,
The Progress of Mankind upward and onward forever.

The Unitarian Laymen's League has issued this statement, which has found ready acceptance:

We worship the living God, our Father and our Friend.

We are disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, teacher of the love of God and the way of life.

We believe in the infinite worth of man and his power of unending growth.

We believe in Liberty, Democracy and Law, as essential to human progress.

We pray for help to worship God sincerely, and to serve our brothers faithfully.

We seek ever for more Truth and more Light.

54. But Unitarians object to religious creeds under the following circumstances: 1. When they are made a test of character; 2. When they are made a condition of fellowship; 3. When they become an obstacle to progress.

Most of the creeds of the Christian Church have been liable to these objections. They have been made a test of Christian character, contrary to the distinct statement of Jesus that obedience, not

belief, or profession, is the true test of character (Matthew 7:15–27), and that true religion consists in love to God and man (Mark 12:28–34). They have been made a condition of Christian fellowship, contrary to the declaration of Jesus that whosoever shall do the will of God is like a mother and sister and brother to him (Mark 3:35). They have been an obstacle to progress, imposing the opinions of past centuries upon present belief. Unitarians reject such creeds as these, but they realize the need of positive convictions.

The Larger Faith

Our Father! while our hearts unlearn
The creeds that wrong thy name,
Still let our hallowed altars burn
With faith's undying flame!

Not by the lightning-gleams of wrath
Our souls thy face shall see,—
The star of love must light the path
That leads to heaven and thee.

Help us to read our Master's will
Through every darkening stain
That clouds his sacred image still,
And see him once again,

The brother man, the pitying friend,
Who weeps for human woes,
Whose pleading words of pardon blend
With cries of raging foes.

If, mid the gathering storms of doubt
Our hearts grow faint and cold,
The strength we cannot live without
Thy love will not withhold.

Our prayers accept; our sins forgive;
Our youthful zeal renew;
Shape for us holier lives to live
And nobler work to do!

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, 1893.

QUESTIONS

53. What is the derivation of the word "creed"? Are creeds useful? What end do they serve? What creed has found wide acceptance in many of our churches? Is there any point of belief not covered which you think ought to be? Is there any point which you think ought to be left out?

54. What are the three ways in which creeds are harmful? What did Jesus say was the test of character? Have creeds caused persecutions and prevented progress? Have Unitarians any creed in the usual sense of the word? Why? Have they always placed character above belief? How do you like the term "basis of fellowship" instead of creed? How does a covenant

differ from a creed? Which do you think better for a church? Did the early Unitarian leaders—such men as Channing, Gannett, Dewey—establish any creed? Had they strong convictions? Did they and do Unitarians now trust free thought? Could Unitarianism then, consistently with its belief in freedom and character, formulate a creed?

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LESSON XVII

LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY

Galatians 5:13. *For ye, brethren, were called for freedom.*

55. Liberal Christianity, or freedom in religion, does not mean liberty to believe what we choose, nor merely to cast aside outworn creeds, but freedom to seek the truth anywhere, everywhere and always. It means that we should not only be willing that others should differ from us, but ready to help them to inquire freely, even if their inquiries lead them to believe what we consider erroneous. It means that we are not to judge each other (Matthew 7:1–5; Romans 14:1–23), nor allow our own belief to be ruled by the judgment of others, or by any church, or by any human authority.

56. Rational Christianity does not mean that we are to reject all beliefs which we do not now see to be reasonable, or to make reason the only source of truth. But it means that we are to test every belief by the light of our reason, and seek to understand clearly what we think and why we think it.

Liberal Christianity implies the ability to look

beyond the horizon of creed, ritual and church, and to realize the good in other creeds, other rituals, other churches. For there is something in all religions that makes all worship one. We are all different interpreters of the same great world. Some interpretations are higher than others, some more precious to us than others, but at the heart of all genuine interpretation is a love of righteousness as the worshipper understands righteousness, a deep feeling of brotherhood as the worshipper understands brotherhood, and a devotion to the service of God as far as in him lies. Beneath all differences of form or creed there is a *spirit* that binds us together. In the various Christian sects, as far as they are earnestly seeking the light, there is something that impels to fellowship and a realization of the great work we could do together.

That which most prevents ready co-operation among the churches is rigidity of form and doctrine. Christian churches, even including the most conservative, are divided into two camps, those who are clinging to the old and those who are reaching out for the new. And it is the inadequacy of the old, and the inability of men to make the old the foundation of the new, and the desire to make the church square with more recent discoveries of genuine thought and life, that causes much of the restlessness and instability of the church.

Liberal Christianity recognizes that the truth we have is prophetic of still higher truth yet to be won, and implies not merely the ready acceptance of it when found, but eager search for it. Freedom to seek the larger truth has always been strongly emphasized by Unitarians.

The Reformers

O pure reformers! not in vain
Your trust in human kind;
The good which bloodshed could not gain,
Your peaceful zeal shall find.

The truths ye urge are borne abroad
By every wind and tide;
The voice of nature and of God.
Speaks out upon your side.

The weapons which your hands have found
Are those which heaven hath wrought,
Light, truth, and love; your battle-ground,
The free, broad field of thought.

O may no selfish purpose break
The beauty of your plan,
No lie from throne or altar shake
Your steady faith in man.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER, 1843.

QUESTIONS

55. What does Liberal Christianity mean? How can we have freedom in religion? Why have we not "liberty to believe what we choose"? (Because of various reasons, such as indolence, apathy, lack of seriousness, etc., many choose to try to believe what they know is untrue.) Must we be careful to make right choices? Then is there freedom to seek everywhere for the truth? Having found what we carefully think to be the truth, must we allow it to be ruled by the judgment of another?

56. What does Rational Christianity mean? Must we always employ our reason on every subject? Are Rational and Liberal Christianity the same? What do the words "orthodox" and "heterodox" mean? Could the heterodoxy of one age have become the orthodoxy of another age unless a free and liberal spirit had existed? What historic examples are there of such changes? What is the difference between reason and dogma? What is reason? (See Lesson 1, § 3.) Did Luther uphold the right of reason? Does a liberal and rational spirit exclude loyalty to one's own faith? Is Unitarianism a free, rational, liberal religion? Is it thus enabled to feel "the sympathy of religions?" Does a Rational and Liberal Christianity presuppose awe, reverence, faith? Can we trust what is not rational? Is there not the "mystery of light" as well as the "mystery of darkness"? Which mystery is it, in a liberal and rational religion? Does such religion press forward to more and more truth? Is such religion but means to an end? Can we measure the grandeur of that end? Is the end the fullest knowledge of God, the

fullest development of one's self, the truest happiness of others? How do you define a liberal in religion? Why does the Unitarian interpretation of religion appeal to you? In what sense are the seekers of the light one? What most hinders co-operation among the churches? How can we best secure it? What causes the restless spirit in religion? Can there ever be a final word in religion?

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LESSON XVIII

CHARACTER

Micah 6:8. *What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.*

57. Unitarians believe that the prime duty of man consists in doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God (Micah 6:8); in loving God with all the heart and mind and will, and one's neighbor as one's self (Matthew 22:37, 39). They believe that the essence of religion is character; that the pure in heart see God; that whoever heareth the sayings of Jesus and doeth them has built his house upon a rock (Matthew 7:24). They believe that if we have an earnest desire to lead a good life we may trust in the promise that "he who hungers and thirsts after righteousness shall be filled."

58. We believe that the really good man is helping to build the kingdom of God, whatever may be the form of his religion. Mere surface morality, not rooted in principle, we do not call goodness. But whoever seeks to do the will of God, and to be faithful and just to man, whether

he be heathen or Christian, we believe will be accepted by the Father of all mankind (Acts 10: 35; Matthew 25: 34–41; Romans 2: 14–16).

59. Unitarians regard character as the end, and religious acts as the means and helps to that end. Inward goodness of the heart expressed by outward goodness in life is primary and essential. Religion is for sake of character, and belongs not only to the Church and to Sunday, but to every place and to all times. It must go with us to our home, to our place of work, to our amusements, and be the help and strength of every day. Religion is given to make all life sacred; to sanctify business, politics, pleasure, work and all our intercourse with each other.

60. Unitarians believe that to attain the highest character three things are necessary. First, man must worship, in order to find the inspiration for the service which is the highest expression of character. Secondly, he must always be a seeker of the light and not content with the light he already has. Thirdly, he must make the light within him shine, so that men may see his good works and glorify, not him, but his Father who is in heaven.

61. Further, Unitarians believe that we all are in some measure responsible for the thoughts, deeds and lives of others, and it is our duty by precept, example and character to make others familiar with the truths, deeds and lives that have

inspired our own. Especially do they feel that the home should be the place where the children first learn the deeper truths for which we stand, and that a familiarity with our ideals as expressed in our hymns and in the lives of our leaders should be established through home influence.

Unitarians also believe that religious duty includes the financial and personal support of the Church and the Church School—and of the American Unitarian Association and all the organizations which further our religious activities.

The Happy Life

How happy is he born or taught
Who serveth not another's will;
Whose armor is his honest thought,
And simple truth his highest skill;

Whose passions not his masters are;
Whose soul is still prepared for death,
Untied unto the world by care
Of prince's ear or vulgar breath;

Who hath his life from rumors freed,
Whose conscience is his strong retreat,
Whose state can neither flatterers feed,
Nor ruin make oppressors great;

Who God doth late and early pray
More of his grace than goods to lend;
And walks with man, from day to day,
As with a brother and a friend.

This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise, or fear to fall;
Lord of himself, though not of lands,
And having nothing, yet hath all.

HENRY WOTTON.

QUESTIONS

57. What is the prime duty of man? What do you consider the essence of religion? Do you love yourself? If not, what does it mean to love one's neighbor as one's self? What is your leading purpose? If you fail in its fulfilment, what is there to inspire you to try again?

58. What is surface morality? What is the important thing in religion, belief or doing the will of God? What is the real test of our acceptability to God?

59. What is religion for? What are religious acts? Can we be good without them? From what should outward goodness arise? If it has any other source, does it often fail? Why is religion given to us?

60. What three things are necessary to attain the highest character? For what three things does our Young People's Religious Union stand? Which of the three do you consider most important? Do you think we could do without any one of these?

61. In what way are we responsible for other lives? What is your duty to your home? to your neighbor? to your community? to your state? to your country? to your church? to your denomination? Are sects divisions or branches of Christianity?

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LESSON XIX

CHRISTIAN UNITY

I Corinthians 12:4. *Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.*

62. It is objected to in Unitarians that they differ from each other so widely as to have no common creed. Roman Catholics made the same objection against the whole Protestant Church. But God has so made the human mind that as soon as men really begin to think they begin to differ. The only people who think alike in this world are the people who do not think at all. A belief that is nothing more than the quotation of somebody else's authoritative opinion is really no belief. Imitation is limitation.

The only agreements that are worth anything are those that come about after full and free inquiry. Without free discussion differences are only covered up. The variety of beliefs among Unitarians is the evidence of open-mindedness and real thinking.

What could be more stupid than uniformity of belief? Limit us to people of the same ideas and experiences and we become just mirrors of self-

repetition. Uniformity means the barrenness of sameness. Real unity is in the wealth of conspiring differences.

The central principle of our religion is fellowship. The great need of a distracted world today is fraternity. The impulse of many hearts is toward unity.

Men of good sense and good will in all churches are gaining a more generous confidence in each other's purposes. We are growing accustomed to the cordial acknowledgment of the value of difference of opinion, tradition and sentiment. We are discovering the unity which is different from uniformity or conformity—a unity of motive and desire and need. We are learning to recognize that all the communions embody more or less rich elements of life. We recognize that the river of spiritual truth cannot be made to flow in any single and undeviating channel. The grace of God, the Apostle tells us, is manifold.

That is a principle precious to the people of the Unitarian inheritance and expressed in the very name of our free fellowship. The word Unitarian, in its original sense, does not relate to any dogma about the Being of God. In the Latin form in which it was originally used in Europe, Unitarii, it simply means the Unity Men, the people who believe in brotherhood, in mutual service, in equal fellowship, and try to put those principles into practice.

There are, indeed, some Christians who still would try to make the unity that all desire a matter of *elimination,* a union in which their own communion will absorb all the others. There seems to be little prospect of success along that line. A mechanical uniformity is as false to the spirit of Christianity as is anarchy. Bigotry and sacerdotalism are principles of isolation, not of federation.

Again, unity is sometimes sought by the way of *legislation,* and ecclesiastical councils institute programs and issue proclamations suggesting terms of agreement. Their discussions, however, serve chiefly to recall attention to forgotten points of difference.

Then the unity of Christendom is often spoken of as if it were *reunion,* something to be found by going back to some earlier phase of Christian experience. Unitarians believe, however, that unity cannot be the recovery of something that has been lost, but an advance to something that has not yet been gained. The good we have known is not perfect unless it points the way to something better. Christianity is not stagnation or retroaction. It is a way of life that grows brighter as more and more of the children of God walk in it together.

Some of the programs of Christian unity hold that it can be achieved by whittling all our different beliefs and traditions down to some irre-

ducible minimum and uniting on that. That again seems an unrewarding method. We want not a reduced but an enriched Christianity. The question is not what each communion may be willing to surrender for the sake of unity, but what it is able to contribute that is true and vital. The unity we are seeking is not a matter of compromise but of comprehensiveness.

Religion is always something larger than the churches that profess it. We may not agree in our intellectual interpretations, but appreciation and hospitality and fellowship in good works are always possible. We need to recognize that while we may not have common beliefs we do have common perils, tasks and duties. What force is there in an appeal for more of human brotherhood in the world coming from people who themselves fail to be brotherly?

From "Christus"

The clashing of creeds, and the strife
Of the many beliefs, that in vain
Perplex man's heart and brain,
Are naught but the rustle of leaves,
When the breath of God upheaves
The boughs of the Tree of Life,
And they subside again!
And I remember still
The words and from whom they came,

Not he that repeateth the name,
But he that doeth the will!

From all vain pomps and shows,
From the pride that overflows,
And the false conceits of men;
From all the narrow rules
And subtleties of schools,
And the craft of tongue and pen;
Bewildered in its search,
Bewildered with the cry:
Lo, here! lo, there, the Church!
Poor, sad Humanity
Through all the dust and heat
Turns back with bleeding feet,
By the weary road it came,
Unto the simple thought
By the great Master taught,
And that remaineth still:
Not he that repeateth the name
But he that doeth the will!

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

QUESTIONS

62. How did Protestants get divided into so many sects? Is Unity the same thing as uniformity? Can we not judge other sects by the best they have produced? Does not Christianity need an admixture of conservatism and progressivism? Would it not be a dull garden with

only one kind of flower in it? Are there not different paths to the same hilltop? Is Unity a matter of intellectual consent or a matter of spiritual ascent? Have not all the sects contributed something worth while to the completeness of Christianity? Is agreement necessary to good will? Can we not have sympathy and co-operation without agreeing in opinions? Can we not practice unity in diversity? Can we not be loyal to our own traditions and at the same time reverent of the traditions and usages that our neighbors cherish?

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LESSON XX

THE FUTURE LIFE

Romans 8:2. *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death.*

63. Unitarians believe that the future life will be a continuation of the present life, with opportunity for further growth and development. Some believe in it only as a justifiable hope, others as a deep reality. At death, indeed, the physical processes cease, but the physical is not all of life. It is merely the channel through which the spiritual finds expression. So the cessation of physical processes does not destroy the soul, the personality, the spirit. The greatest forces of life are unseen and eternal, and all that we see and hear and feel is but the expression of them. But force is always greater than any of its expressions. The mind is mightier than its creations, love is mightier than its gifts, God is greater than his world, and the soul greater than the physical life.

"Life is ever Lord of death,
And Love can never lose its own."

64. According to the New Testament outward death—what we call death—is nothing; it is merely the soul laying down its present instruments in order to take up others. The only real death is the soul's death; that is sin, ignorance, unbelief. The soul which lives in selfishness and sin is dead in its higher faculties, and the teachings and example of Jesus lead us out of this spiritual death into spiritual life; as Paul says, "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). The resurrection is spiritual resurrection, as real life is spiritual life.

65. Unitarians do not connect probation, judgment or retribution with the future life. Life is a test that all must meet, but man is not on any such probation that failure will condemn him to everlasting punishment. Nor do Unitarians believe in a Day of Judgment, but believe that every man is judged daily by his own conscience. As for retribution, they believe that any future retribution comes from the operation of the same laws which produce retribution here. Right doing tends to moral health and spiritual growth; wrong doing to moral weakness and suffering. All punishment is intended to reform and to do good. Unitarians do not believe in heaven and hell as two separate and distinct worlds—one for the good and the other for the wicked. Hell, as far it is in their thought at all, means alienation

from God, and heaven means working and living with God. They deny the doctrine of everlasting punishment as hostile to the sovereignty, wisdom, justice and mercy of God.

Assured

I long for household voices gone,
For vanished smiles I long;
But God hath led my dear ones on,
And he can do no wrong.

I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

And if my heart and flesh are weak
To bear an untried pain,
The bruisèd reed he will not break,
But strengthen and sustain.

I know not where his islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond his love and care.

And so beside the silent sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from him can come to me
On ocean or on shore.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

QUESTIONS

63. What is the future life? What grounds have you for believing in it? Is it a hope or a reality? Is the soul mightier than any expression of it? What do we mean when we say of men that, being dead, they speak to us? Is belief in a future life a help to a nobler life? Why?

64. What is the only real death? What is the resurrection and the life of the soul? When are we free from the fear of death? When does immortality begin? Why? Have we other reasons, besides the statements in the New Testament, for believing in immortality? What do science and human consciousness teach? Have all nations and tribes believed in another world? What kind of ideas have they held? What is your own idea of heaven? Does belief in immortality grow stronger as we love God and feel his influence? Is his very character an evidence of immortality? What effect does such belief have upon your own present life? Does such belief help you to bear the miseries of others? Can such belief make us selfish?

65. What is the Unitarian thought of probation? Do you believe in a Day of Judgment? What is your idea of retribution? Are heaven and hell places or states of mind?

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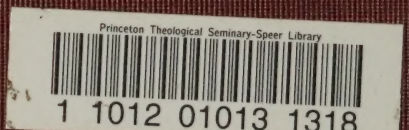
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